

Appln No. 09/997,264

Amdt date April 18, 2005

Supplemental Reply to Office action of November 18, 2004

each comprising a plurality of standard profile members rigidly welded together to form a mecano-welded structure, wherein each box is removably fixed on a respective side of said vertical frame arrangement, and wherein each box comprises an upper surfaced portion that receives at least one module that circulates the part-carrying pallets and a lower portion provided with adjustable feet for adjusting a horizontal positioning of said upper surfaced portion."

As shown for example in FIG. 19, GB '738 discloses a machine having a casing 308 for circulating part carrying pallets on an upper surface thereof to a series of work stations 391, 395, and 397 for performing various functions on the part carrying pallets. The Examiner contends that this machine includes "at least two boxes each comprising a plurality of standard profile members, wherein each box is removably fixed on a respective side of [a] vertical frame arrangement, and wherein each box comprises an upper surfaced portion that receives at least one module that circulates the part-carrying pallets" (current Office action, page 2, paragraph number 3.)

However, the casing 308 of GB '738 is the only box which contains an upper surface for circulating part-carrying pallets. GB '738 makes no suggestion to have at least two boxes removably fixed on a respective side of a vertical frame, wherein "each box comprises an upper surfaced portion that receives at least one module that circulates the part-carrying pallets" as specified in claim 1. Delannoy does not make up for this deficiency in GB '738. As such, GB '738 and Delannoy, either alone or in combination, do not render claim 1 obvious.

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Claim 1 also recites that the vertical frame arrangement comprises "a plurality of standard profile members rigidly welded together to form a rigid mecano-welded structure" and at least two boxes, "wherein each box is removably fixed on a respective side of said vertical frame arrangement, and wherein each box comprises...a lower portion provided with adjustable feet for adjusting a horizontal positioning of said upper surfaced portion."

It is unclear what the Examiner considers to be the adjustable feet of GB '738 and what the Examiner considers to be the vertical frame arrangement of GB '738. GB '738 claims that the machine includes "three feet 301, 302, and 303 (Figure 19) rising from bases 304, 305, 306 resting on the ground via pads 307 of adjustable height" (page 6, lines 72-89.) As such, it appears that the feet 301-303 of GB '738 are comparable to the claimed adjustable feet.

However, Applicant fails to see where GB '738 teaches the claimed vertical frame arrangement comprising "a plurality of standard profile members rigidly welded together to form a rigid mecano-welded structure" and "wherein each box is removably fixed on a respective side of said vertical frame arrangement," as specified by claim 1. Delannoy does not make up for this deficiency in GB '738. As such, for this additional reason, GB '738 and Delannoy, either alone or in combination, do not render claim 1 obvious.

Claims 1, 3-10 and 13-16 depend from claim 1. Claim 1 is now believed to be in condition for allowance over GB '738 and Delannoy. As such, Applicant submits that claims 1, 3-10 and 13-

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16 are also allowable over GB '738 and Delannoy as being dependent from an allowable base claim and for the additional limitations they contain therein.

For example, claim 14 recites that "said plurality of standard profile members of each said box are welded together to form a generally parallelepiped-shaped configuration." The casing 308 of GB '738 does not form such a configuration. Delannoy does not make up for this deficiency in GB '738. As such, for this additional reason, GB '738 and Delannoy, either alone or in combination, do not render claim 14 obvious.

Claim 15 depends from claim 14 and further specifies that "the plurality of standard profile members of each box comprise four standard profile members welded together to form an upper rectangular configuration; four standard profile members welded together to form a lower rectangular configuration; and four standard profile members each having an upper end welded to a corner of the upper rectangular configuration and a lower end welded to a corner of the lower rectangular configuration." The casing 308 of GB '738 does not form such a configuration. Delannoy does not make up for this deficiency in GB '738. As such, for this additional reason, GB '738 and Delannoy, either alone or in combination, do not render claim 15 obvious.

Claim 16 depends from claim 15 and further specifies that the "plurality of standard profile members of said vertical frame arrangement are welded together to form a generally rectangular configuration." Applicant respectfully submits that GB '738 does not disclose, teach or suggest such a configuration. Delannoy does not make up for this deficiency in

Appln No. 09/997,264

Amdt date April 18, 2005

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GB '738. As such, for this additional reason, GB '738 and Delannoy, either alone or in combination, do not render claim 16 obvious.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 3-10 and 13-16 over GB '738 and Delannoy under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the Amendment filed on February 18, 2005 and the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-10 and 13-16 are in condition for allowance, and a timely indication of allowance is respectfully requested. If there are any remaining issues that can be addressed by telephone, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,
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